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LETTER DATED 6 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In reference to a letter addressed by the representative of the Sudan to the President of the Security Council on 31 December 1996, contained in document S/1997/2, I have the honour to make the following clarification.

In this letter, the representative of the Sudan to the United Nations once again levelled an unfounded accusation saying "On 29 December 1996, a Sudanese army helicopter was assuming routine border patrol near the town of Hamashkoreb on the Sudanese Eritrean border. It was attacked and shot down by an anti-aircraft missile (SAM-7) launched by Eritrean troops from inside the Eritrean territories".

This accusation by the National Islamic Front's (NIF) representative against my Government is baseless and pure fabrication. It is a continuation of the usual disinformation and deliberate fabrications in which the NIF regime in Khartoum has long been engaging itself to distort political realities in the Sudan and hoodwink public opinion by pointing an accusing finger at others.

Hamashkoreb, where the alleged shooting of a helicopter is said to have taken place, is a spot inside Sudanese territory that is over 60 kilometres from the Eritrean border and the anti-aircraft missile (SAM-7) said to have been launched from Eritrea can by no means technically and practically reach it and down the said helicopter.

Once again, my Government denies any involvement in the Sudanese internal affairs and categorically rejects the false accusations by the NIF regime to the downing of any Sudanese helicopter.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Amdemicael KAHSAI
Permanent Representative

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